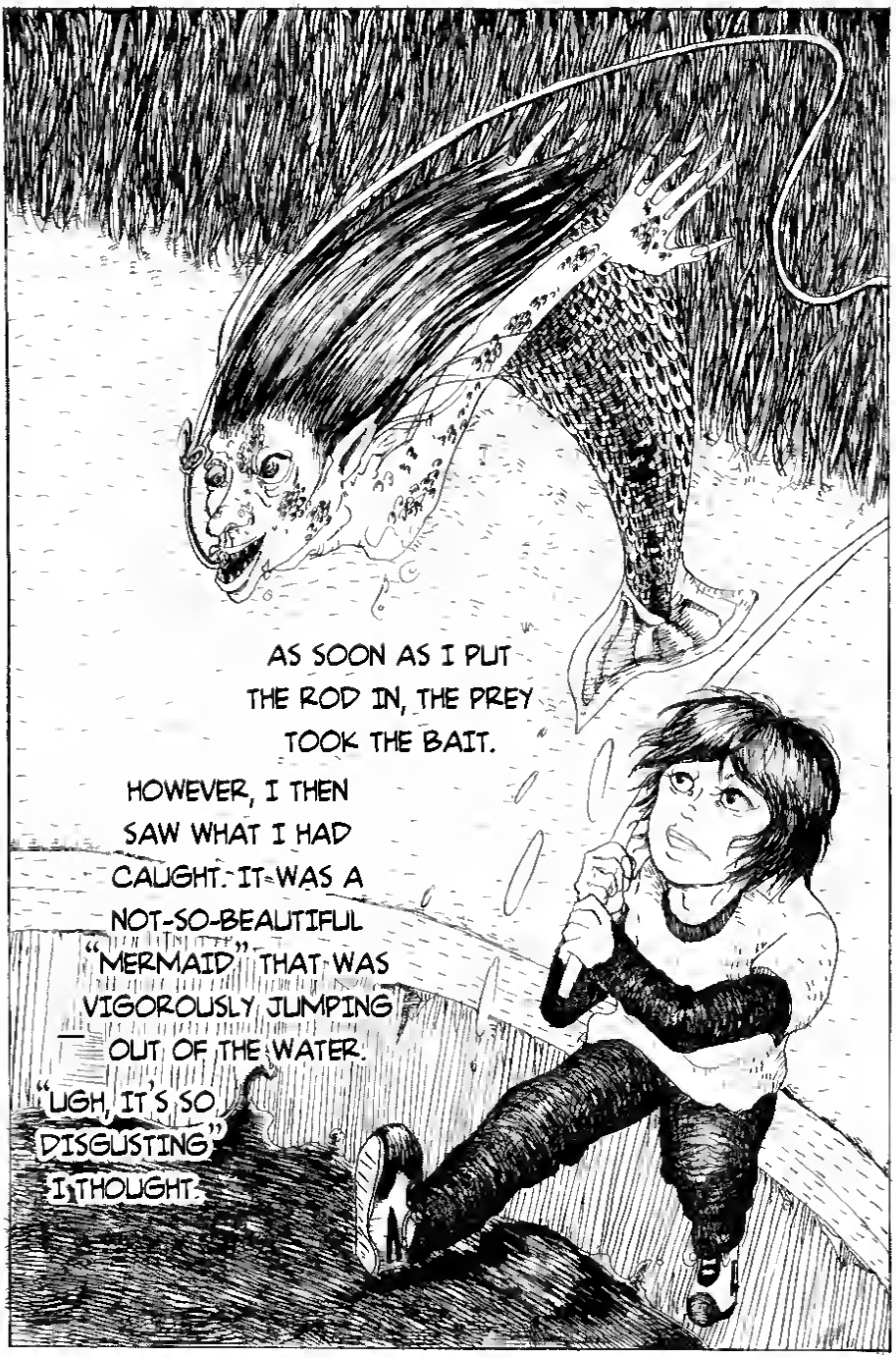
[CHOSEN WORK]

FOREST BREEDING FARM

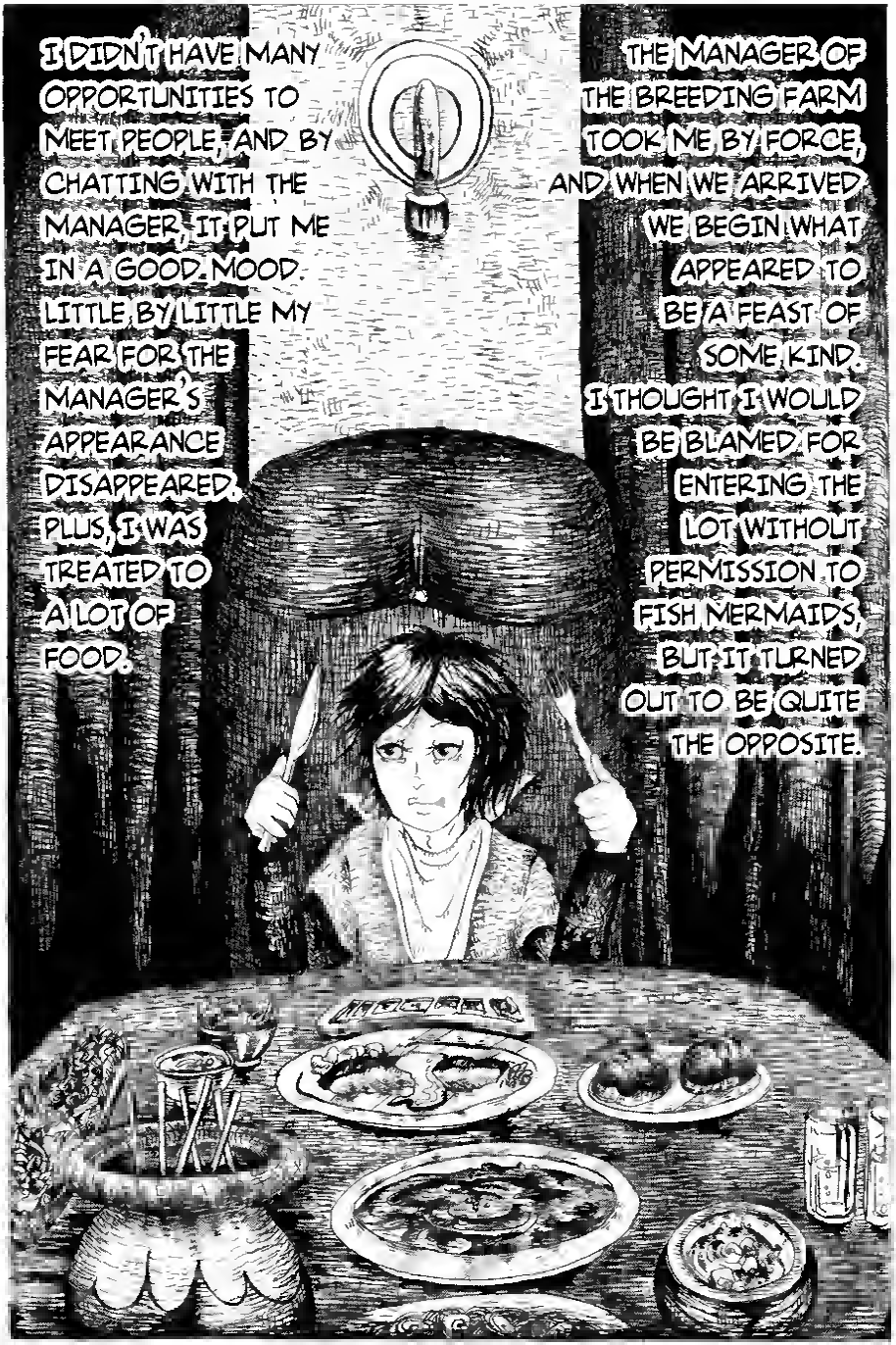
BY SACHI TOGASHI

WALKING THROUGH THE THICKLY OVERGROWN FOLIAGE, I WANTED TO TRY MY HAND AT SOME FISHING.
I KNEW THAT DEEP IN THE FOREST EXISTED A MERMAID BREEDING FARM WHERE, ONCE BEFORE JANUARY, MERMAIDS WOULD BE SELECTIVLY BRED BY LIVING IN FRESH WATER.

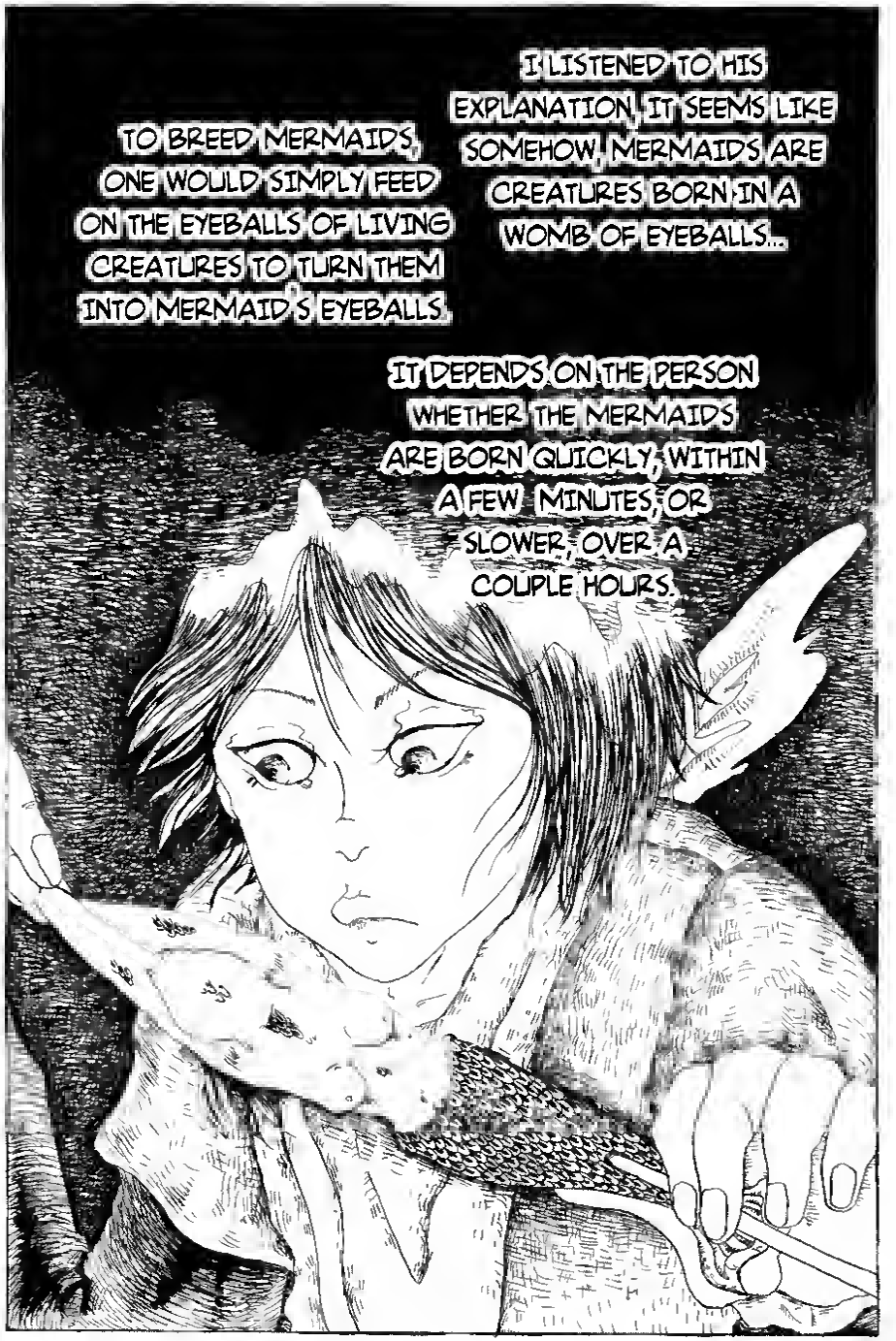
RUSTLE
I FOUND IT
WELL, LET'S FISH
PLUNK
I WON'T BE FOUND OUT IF I JUST CATCH ONE OR TWO.

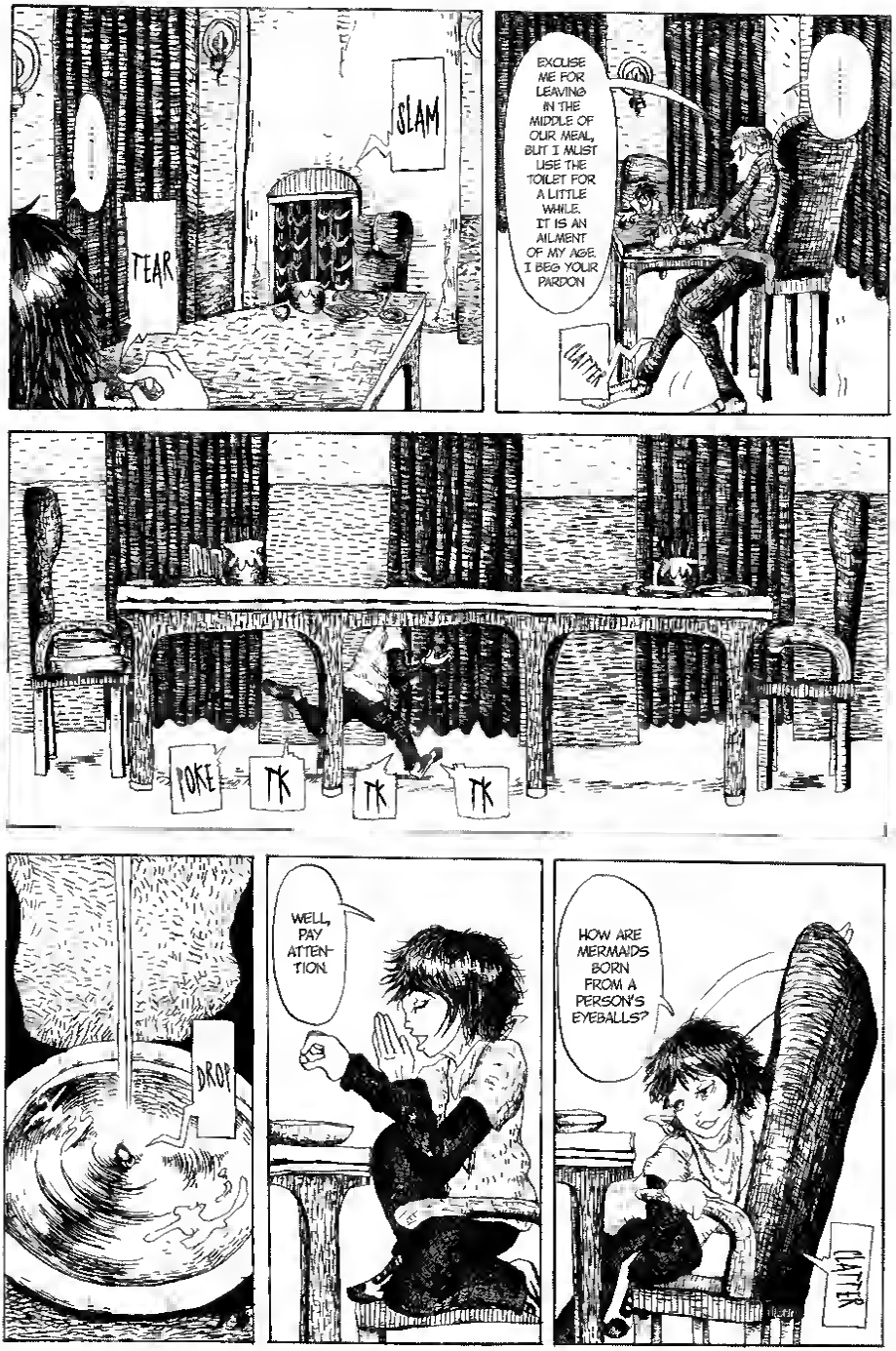

AS SOON AS I PUT THE ROD IN, THE PREY TOOK THE BAIT.
HOWEVER, I THEN SAW WHAT I HAD CAUGHT. IT WAS A NOT-SO-BEAUTIFUL "MERMAID" THAT WAS VIGOROUSLY JUMPING OUT OF THE WATER.
"UGH, IT'S SO DISGUSTING" I THOUGHT.

I WONDER WHAT YOU'RE DOING
TAP TAP
AAH------, I CAUGHT IT, I CAUGHT IT
FISHING PERHAPS?
.....
HO HO HO HO
WAH WAH WAH
WAAH
MEETING HERE MUST BE OUR FATE. I'D LOVE TO SHARE A MEAL WITH YOU AT MY MANSION.


I DIDN'T HAVE MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET PEOPLE, AND BY CHATTING WITH THE MANAGER, IT PUT ME IN A GOOD MOOD. LITTLE BY LITTLE MY FEAR FOR THE MANAGER'S APPEARANCE DISAPPEARED. PLUS, I WAS TREATED TO A LOT OF FOOD.
THE MANAGER OF THE BREEDING FARM TOOK ME BY FORCE, AND WHEN WE ARRIVED WE BEGIN WHAT APPEARED TO BE A FEAST OF SOME KIND. I THOUGHT I WOULD BE BLAMED FOR ENTERING THE LOT WITHOUT PERMISSION TO FISH MERMAIDS, BUT IT TURNED OUT TO BE QUITE THE OPPOSITE.

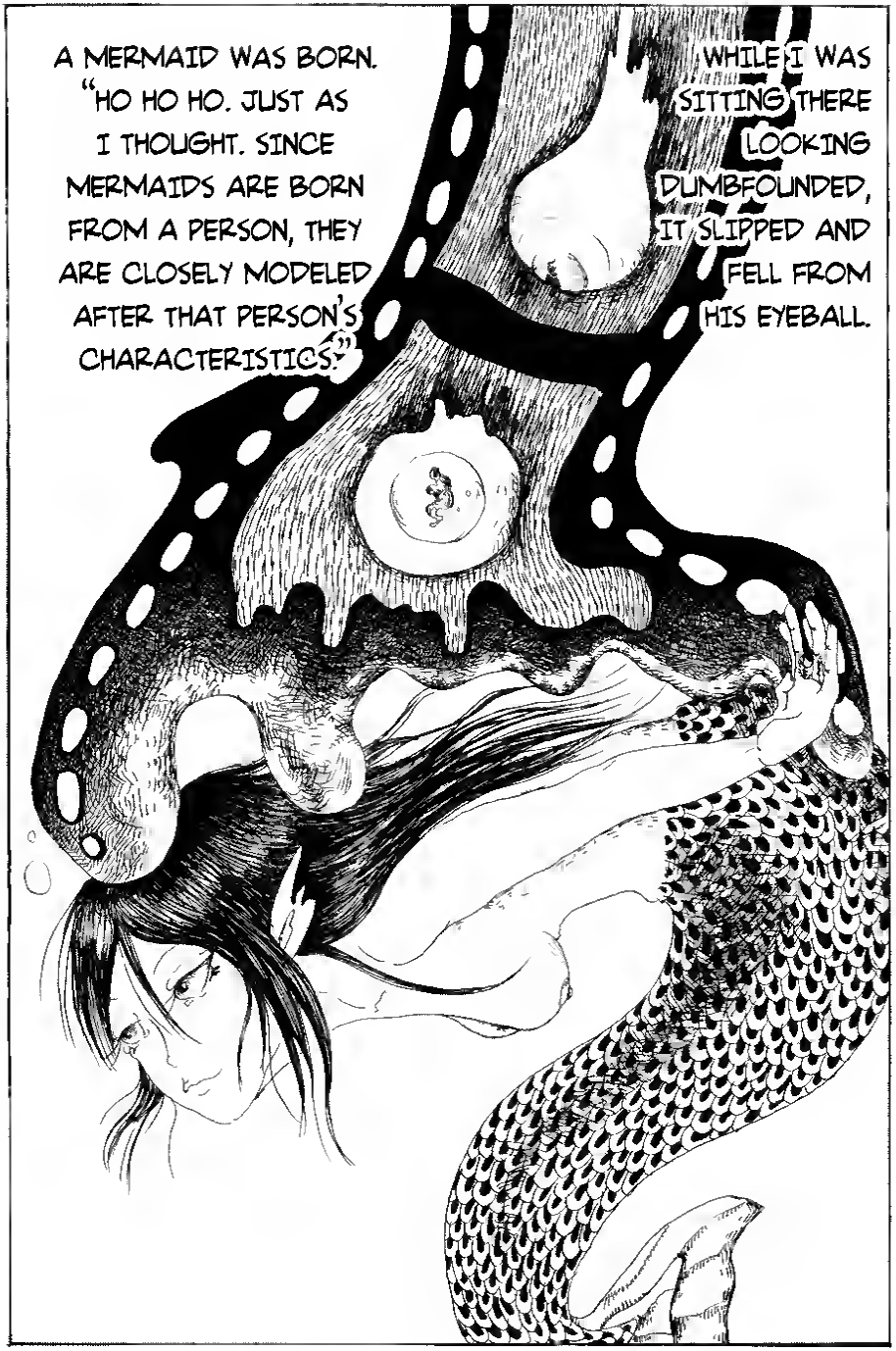
YUP, IT'S DELICIOUS.
MUNCH
HO HO
DOES IT SUIT YOUR FANCY?
CRUNCH CRUNCH
SWIPP
OH, THAT MERMAID
EXCUSE ME, SHOWING YOU A DEFECTIVE MERMAID EARLIER WAS RUDE OF ME...
EXACTLY, IN ORDER TO MAKE IT EDIBLE, A MERMAID SHOULD BE MADE PREGNANT BY A FISH.
THE PROTEIN TASTES DELICIOUS... THE SIGHT OF IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE GROTESQUE, THOUGH... HO HO...


I LISTENED TO HIS EXPLANATION, IT SEEMS LIKE SOMEHOW, MERMAIDS ARE CREATURES BORN IN A WOMB OF EYEBALLS...
TO BREED MERMAIDS, ONE WOULD SIMPLY FEED ON THE EYEBALLS OF LIVING CREATURES TO TURN THEM INTO MERMAID'S EYEBALLS.
IT DEPENDS ON THE PERSON WHETHER THE MERMAIDS ARE BORN QUICKLY, WITHIN A FEW MINUTES, OR SLOWER, OVER A COUPLE HOURS.


SLAM
TEAR
EXCUSE ME FOR LEAVING IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR MEAL, BUT I MUST USE THE TOILET FOR A LITTLE WHILE. IT IS AN AILMENT OF MY AGE. I BEG YOUR PARDON
CLATTER
POKE
TK
TK
TK
DROP
WELL, PAY ATTENTION.
HOW ARE MERMAIDS BORN FROM A PERSON'S EYEBALLS?
CLATTER

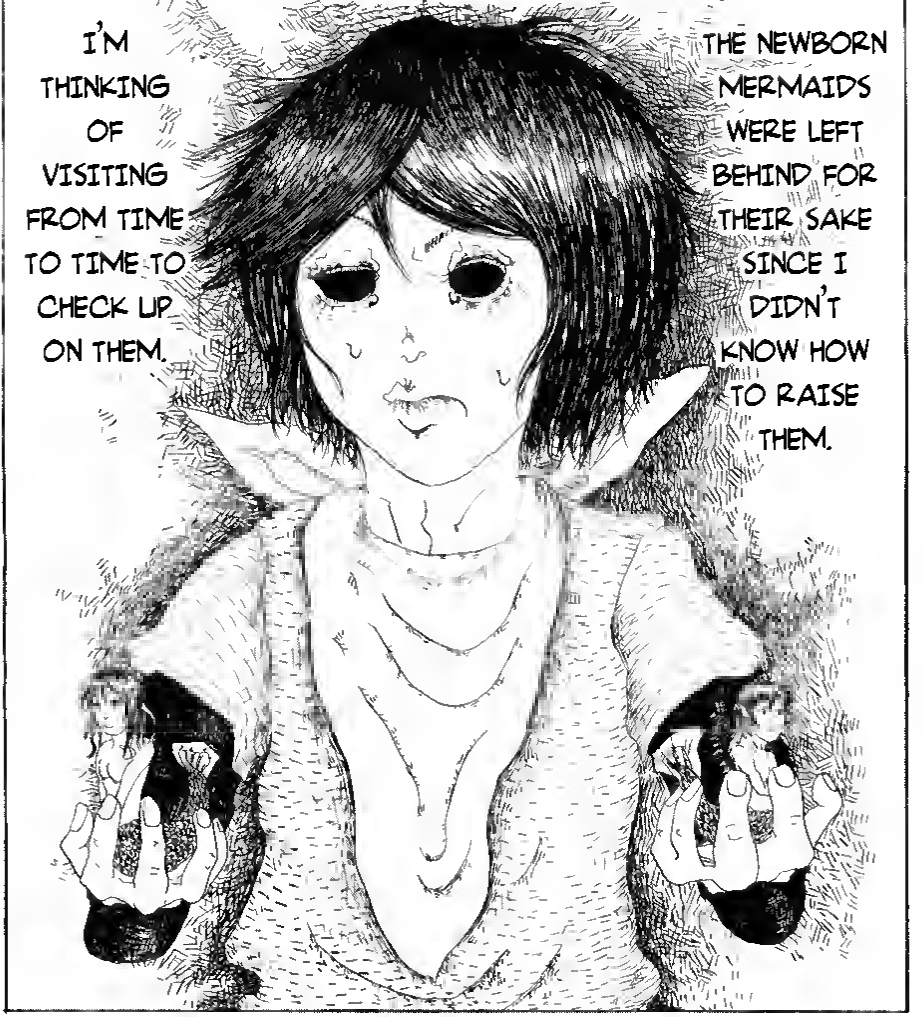
... HE PROCEEDED TO CASUALLY EAT THE SOUP IN WHICH HE PLACED A MERMAID'S EYE, AND WITHOUT INSPIRING ANY DOUBT, HE PICKED UP THE SPOON WITH HIS HAND, AND CONTINUALLY CARRIED THE SOUP TO HIS MOUTH.
WHEN THE MANAGER RETURNED, THE SMALL TALK RESUMED, AND AFTER LISTENING FOR A WHILE...

GULP
UHN
NNG
HO HO HO HO O
?
CLATTER
DRIP
APPARENTLY, MY EYEBALL IS FITTING TO BE A MERMAID'S WOMB, RIGHT? IT HAS BEEN BORN WHILE WE WERE SPEAKING
OH NO, TOO FAST, I'LL END UP LOSING IT BY NO MEANS WOULD THIS MERMAID'S EYEBALL BECOME SUITABLE FOR A MEAL


A MERMAID WAS BORN. "HO HO HO. JUST AS I THOUGHT. SINCE MERMAIDS ARE BORN FROM A PERSON, THEY ARE CLOSELY MODELED AFTER THAT PERSON'S CHARACTERISTICS."
WHILE I WAS SITTING THERE LOOKING DUMBFOUNDED, IT SLIPPED AND FELL FROM HIS EYEBALL.

FRANK-LY...
ALRIGHT, I'VE BEEN KEEPING A SECRET. I TREATED YOU TO THIS FEAST FOR ONE REASON...
AAAH!!
CLATTER
OH WELL, HONESTLY, I'M SURPRISED TOO. SUCH MERMAID CAN BE BORN EVEN FROM PEOPLE LIKE ME, HUH?
HUH?!
..A MERMAID'S EYEBALL HAS BEEN PROPERLY SET INSIDE YOU HO HO HO PLEASE FORGIVE ME, JUST THINK OF THIS AS AN OLD GEEZER'S CUTE LITTLE MISCHIEF.
WAAAH!!
WEEP

"DAMMIT," I THOUGHT, BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. TWO GOOEY MERMAIDS WERE BORN, OOZING OUT FROM BOTH OF MY EYES. ACCORDING TO THE MANAGER'S SPEECH, THE EYEBALL WOULD POP OUT IN ABOUT THREE DAYS, BUT IT SEEMS AS THOUGH IT WAS A LITTLE TOO EFFECTIVE IN CHILDREN. THIS IS LIKELY THE RESULT OF EATING A MERMAID'S EYEBALL. AFTER STAYING AT THE MANSION FOR THREE DAYS, I TOOK A SAFE ROUTE BACK HOME.


I'M THINKING OF VISITING FROM TIME TO TIME TO CHECK UP ON THEM.
THE NEWBORN MERMAIDS WERE LEFT BEHIND FOR THEIR SAKE SINCE I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO RAISE THEM.

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Golden Roze Scans presents:

FOREST BREEDING FARM

A ONE-SHOT BY SACHI TOGASHI

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